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## THE STOCK OF THE EUROPEAN SALE SHOP AT FORT VANCOUVER, 1829-1860

IN  
STORAGE

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## ABSTRACT

The European Sale Shop at Fort Vancouver, 1829-1860, was the first retail store in the Oregon Territory. An analysis of the stock of the store, derived from archaeological excavations and historical records, indicates three tentative conclusions: (1) the relative proportion of fur trade stock was decreasing by 1840, as the increasing population of the Oregon Territory sought more consumer-type goods; (2) the importation of English goods dominated the stock, except for a small percentage of country-made products produced at Fort Vancouver and the subsidiary posts, until about 1854, when large quantities of American-made products are bought and stocked; and (3) technological and cultural innovations, such as the use of matches for fire-starting in place of flint-and-steel, can be dated in terms of their introduction into the cultural life of the Oregon Territory. Although, a more comprehensive archaeological synthesis is required -- to be supplemented by a more thorough search of Hudson's Bay Company archives in London and Ottawa -- the data imply the very large contribution made to the material culture of the Oregon Territory by the European Sale Shop.

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319	John Work papers
* 60	Fort Nisqually
	Reel
	1---begins with 1841
	2---1855
	3---1857
	4---1867
	5---1856
	6---1851-2
	7---1853
	8---1853
	9---1865
	10---1868-1874
	11---1861
	12---1868
	13---Ft McLoughlin 1841
	Nisqually 1870
46	Fort Langley
* 878	Astoria Customhouse Records
* 67	Log of the Beaver 1838-1840

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\*these are by far the best for interpretive material on trade goods; especially the invoices and inventories and about one out of every three letters has important information on goods.

"...Went to the stores and found them filled with the cargos of the two ships both above and below, all in unbroken bails. They are chiefly Indians goods and will be sent away this fall to the several different posts of the Com. in the Ship, Neriade. Find here also every article for comfort and durability we need, but many articles for convenience and all Fancy articles are not here..." (Drury 1973:103)

Narcissa Whitman wrote the above observations in her diary entry of September 16, 1836. The entry represents one of the earliest impressions of the first retail store in the Oregon Territory, the European Sale Shop at Fort Vancouver.

From the date of its establishment at the final location, Fort Vancouver had a store for the sale of personal items to Hudson's Bay Company employees. During the early period, when there were few visitors who were not Company employees and no settlers, except for a few retired Company employees in the Champoeg area, the Sale Shop functioned mainly for the convenience of the firm's own gentlemen and servants. The officers and clerks of the Company frequently ordered clothing, books, special food-stuffs, and similar luxuries directly from England, but for the men in the lower ranks, the Sale Shop was the only available source for the shirts and trousers, tobacco, pipes, eating utensils, and other items they and their families needed to supplement the rations dispensed by the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Sale Shop at Fort Vancouver served not only the employees at the Columbia Department headquarters depot but also those at many outlying posts, especially Fort Walla Walla, Fort Colville, Fort Okanagan, and Fort Nisqually. Goods at those posts were largely stocked for trading with the Indians. Generally, the servants at the subsidiary posts were allowed to buy only once a year, through written orders sent to the Fort Vancouver Sale Shop (Hussey 1972:188).

Mrs. Whitman's observations on the stock of the Sale Shop reflect the dominance of the fur trade, for Hudson's Bay Company purposes, during the early period. During later periods, the stock of the store changed, indicating social and cultural changes in the Oregon Territory between 1829 and 1860. The changes in the stock of the European Sale Shop for that period, as indicated by historical and archaeological materials, is the theme of this paper.

Data from two types of sources, archaeological and historical, are used to develop this outline of the stock of the store. The archaeological source is the interim reports of the Fort Vancouver project of the National Park Service, 1970-1974. As part of that project, the European Sale Shop was excavated in part, by the National Park Service in 1973 and by the Oregon Archaeological Society (under National Park Service supervision) in 1974. The historical source is the records of Fort Nisqually, a subsidiary post which was supplied by Fort Vancouver from 1833 through 1852, and continued to exchange stock with the latter fort from 1853 through 1860. Other sources, including inventories, invoices, packing lists, newspaper advertisements of the time, letters, and the interim archaeological reports for other buildings excavated in the Fort Vancouver project, are also employed to attempt a conceptual reconstruction of the stock of the Sale Shop.

Although the research is incomplete, awaiting the final synthesis of the archaeological research at Fort Vancouver and the more systematic use of the Hudson's Bay Company archives in London and Ottawa, three tentative conclusions emerge from the data: (1) the relative proportion of fur trade stock was decreasing by 1840; (2) the importation of English goods dominated the stock (the only exceptions being country-made goods) until 1844, when large quantities of American-made products are stocked; and (3) technological and cultural innovations, such as the use of matches instead of flint and steel and the use of machine-cut sheet nails instead of hand-forged nails, can be dated in terms of their introduction into the cultural life of the Oregon Territory.

1829-1833

Except for the visit of William Fraser Tolmie, who purchased cloth for two calico jackets and a tartan vest in 1833, little is known of the stock of the Sale Shop for the early fur trade period (Hussey 1972:189). From Hudson's Bay Company archives, it is known that most of the goods at Fort Vancouver were produced and shipped from England. Buttons, for example, were purchased from Messrs. Scholefield and Taylor, hardware merchants of Birmingham, England. Shipments to Fort Vancouver in 1828, 1829, and 1830, list no less than 168 gross yellow metal and white metal buttons, of 11 styles (Currie 1936:n.p.)

The letters of Dr. John McLoughlin, Fort Vancouver Chief Factor, indicate a preoccupation with the fur trade and with fur trade goods during the period (Barker 1948). A representative list of items stocked for the fur trade is shown as Table 1, derived from Merk(1931:172-3).

Ross (1975:425) has identified the following items as those consistently manufactured at Fort Vancouver from an early period: axes, traps, adzes, knives, household ironware, tinware and copperwares, wrought iron and steel, agricultural tools, horseshoes, and fish spears. The above list, based on archaeological excavations of the blacksmithing areas, could probably be supplemented by the products of local carpenters, coopers, wheelwrights and other craftsmen working at the fort. These products, plus the imported fur trade items shown in Table 1, probably comprised the<sup>entire</sup> stock of the store for the period.

1834-1839

As is the case in the earlier period, the record of a visitor is the only direct evidence of the stock of the Sale Shop during the following period. Mrs. Whitman's visit of 1836 occasioned the quotation which opened the paper. She went on to describe the stock on hand as follows:

TABLE 1

FUR TRADE GOODS STOCKED BY THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY IN THE COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT,  
1824-5 (Source: Merk 1931:172-3)

Awls (Indian)  
Axes (Com. Half, Com. small, Square-headed half, Square-headed small)  
Blankets (Plain: 3 points, 2-1/2 points, 2 points, 1-1/2 points, and 1 point;  
Green: 4 points and 3 points; Hudson's Bay: 3 points and 2-1/2 points;  
Rose: 9/4 and 8/4)  
Balls (Musket and Trading)  
Beads (Sky Blue Enameled and Transparent Canton)  
Buttons (Y & W metal)  
Cloth (Blue List and Comm Scarlet)  
Combs (Comm Horn)  
Coating Bolt (Blue, Grey and Red)  
Capots (Woolen: 3-1/2 ells, 3 ells, and 2-1/2 ells)  
Dags (Plain 7 inches, Eyed 8 inches, and Eyed 12 inches)  
Duffles (Blue)  
Files (flat 6 & 7 inches)  
Files (flat 8, 9 and 10 inches)  
Flints (Gun)  
Guns (Com. N.W. and fine half stocked)  
Gartering  
Glasses (looking oval gilt and looking pocket cased)  
Gun Powder  
Hats (Beaver and Comm Wool)  
Hooks (Large cod and Small Kerby)  
Horns (Powder)  
Knives (Scalping, Folding, and Clasp)  
Kettles (brass and copper, and tin)  
Needles (assorted)  
Pistols (Com. American and Engl. brown barrels)  
Rum (reduced 1/3 pint)  
Rifles (American and English twist barrels)  
Rings (plain brass)  
Strouds (comm blue bd cord and H Pay blue bd cord)  
Scissors (women and large shop)  
Shot (Beaver and Duck)  
Tobacco (Twist and Leaf)  
Thimbles (brass)  
Vermillion  
Wire (Brass Collar)

The Company lets us have goods as cheap as can be afforded & cheaper probably than we can get them from the States. They only charge us a hundred per cent more than the prime cost, or England prices. All their goods are of the best quality & will be durable. Husband has obtained a good/heating/stove of Mr. Pambrun of W.W. & we take up enough sheet iron for the pipe. My tin ware has all been made within a week past of the first rate block tin. I have six large milk pans, coffee & tea pots, candle sticks & molds. Covered pails & a baker ... and besides this the blacksmiths have all been employed in making our farming utensils & c ... There are a few deficiencies in the cloth line. No provision is made for bedding except blankets & these are dear. No sheets, nothing for shirting except striped or calico. I have found a piece of bleach linen which I take for sheets, the only one in the store, price 75 cents per yard. We see now that it was not necessary to bring anything because we find all here (Drury 1973:213).

As Mrs. Whitman indicates, much of the stock of the store is "country-made", that is, manufactured at Fort Vancouver or subsidiary posts. Except for the American rifles listed on Table 1, all of the stock of the store was probably either "country-made" or of English origin at this time. In the excavation of the blacksmithing areas of the Fort Vancouver compound, Ross has noted the large amounts of metal stock on hand (1975: ). Hussey (1974:290-292) has inventoried the metal stock imported for manufacturing at Fort Vancouver. The lists indicate a large emphasis on developing "country-made" products to supplement and probably replace the expensive English import products.

Table 2 tabulates changes in the quantity and variety of selected items at Fort Nisqually from 1833-1839.



TABLE 2

THE QUANTITY AND VARIETY (represented in parentheses by the number of types and sizes recorded) OF SELECTED ARTICLES INVENTORIED AT FORT NISQUALLY, 1833-1839

(Source: Fort Nisqually

Records 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, and 1839)

Article	Unit of Quantity	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839
Beads	Pounds	12.5	20	-	14	12(2)	25.5(7)	14(6)
Blankets	Number	172(3)	660(5)	487(5)	277(1)	305(4)	536(5)	605(5)
Capots	Number	4(2)	62(7)	24(5)	14(4)	45(6)	47(6)	21(5)
Guns	Number	11	10	-	13	16	16	23(2)
Gunflints	cwt.	4	3	2	1.25	2	4	3
Hooks	cwt.	7.3(3)	6(4)	5.5(3)	-	3.6(3)	-	2.5(3)
Fire Steels	dozen	4.5	-	4.25	3.5	3.5	3	-
Fin Kettles	nests		5(2)	4	9(8)	20(11)	14(10)	17(11)

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Although there are changes in the quantities and varieties of some commodities (e.g. blankets, capots, and tin kettles) during the period, no definite trends are evident. In one article, beads, there is a striking change in varieties stocked, reflected on the 1838 inventory for the first time. Whereas the Simpson standard of 1824-1825 had listed only two types of beads, the sky blue enameled and the transparent Canton, and the 1833-1837 inventories had added only one other variety, the common white, the 1838 inventory lists the following:

3 lbs. sky blue and com. white beads  
22.5 bunches of:

cut glass crystal no. 4 beads  
cut glass yellow no. 6 beads  
cut glass blue no. 4 beads  
cut glass blue no. 6 beads  
cut glass white no. 6 beads

(Fort Nisqually Records 1838)

Thereafter, on Fort Nisqually inventories, the cut glass beads join the other varieties on the lists. There is the possibility that the Hudson's Bay Company, alarmed by what was then an apparent decline in the fur trade, was seeking new commodities to stimulate the Indian trappers. Perhaps a search of the Hudson's Bay Company archives would yield a clue to this change in stock.

1840-1852

Coinciding with the influx of settlers into the Oregon Territory, swelling the population and increasing the demand for consumer goods, the Hudson's Bay Company drastically altered and increased the stock of goods coming into the European Sale Shop. As the fur trade orientation yielded to a new mercantile orientation, the stock of the store changed dramatically. Table 3, a list of new items, not shown on inventories before the date indicated, illustrates the new stock.

TABLE 3

SELECTED ITEMS OF NEW STOCK, FORT NISQUALLY, 1841-1860 (Source: Fort Nisqually  
Records 1841, 1843, 1846, 1848, 1849, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858,  
1859, 1860). Note: American-made goods are not included (see table ).

1841

Pewter candlemolds  
Milk tin strainers  
Putty  
Holland twine  
Brass cocks (2 sizes)  
Double bolt padlocks  
Scrubbing brushes  
Masons trowels  
Pivot bolts

1843

Cast iron stove  
Cupboard locks  
Japanned candle snuffers  
Steelyards  
Maitre de Getz twine  
Sturgeon twine  
Window glass (7x9)  
Frames for sashes  
Nail moulds  
Goodse necks for pit saw  
Covering nails  
Oil stone  
Screw drivers  
Copper boring wires

1846

Earthenware wash hand basin  
Highland bonnets  
Cruet stand and casters  
Ring neck decanters  
Riddles for tanners  
Irons for tanners  
Screens for tanners

1848

Blacksmith's anvil and bellows  
Augers (3 sizes)  
Cut nails  
Spanish brown paint  
Prite metal table spoons  
Ladies welt shoes  
Ladies welt boots  
Resist shawls (36")

1849

Japanned silk hat covers  
Kent hammers  
Dutch camp oven

1853

Clanronda Tartan yardage  
Macduff Tartan yardage  
Rob Roy Tartan yardage  
Muslin de laine gownpieces  
Army Blucher boots

1854

Paramatta Oxonian Coats  
Cachmeretta Oxonian Coats  
Cashmeretta d'Orsay Coats  
Saleratus  
Alpaca Oxonian Coats  
Brown beaver Chesterfield coats  
Assorted colored seed beads  
Barleycorn beads  
Bradded Blucher boots  
Corah China Handkerchiefs  
Brass Jews Harps  
Mens Sanguhar Hose  
Mourning shawls  
Shephords plaid tweed trousers  
Alpaca Umbrella

1856

Thains Adamantine Candles  
Mens kip brogans  
Atlantic white lead  
Collins handled axes  
Woodscrews (3/8" to 2" sizes) (labeled as "British")  
Solid Box Vice  
Windsor Chairs (labeled as "British")

1858

Alpaca Pale:ot coats  
Alpaca Paxton coats  
Summer cloth Oxonian coats  
Tortoiseshell pocket combs  
Girls white cotton golv gloves  
Mottled soap

One of the customers of the Fort Vancouver Sale Shop during the 1839-1841 period was Ewing Young (1810-1841), a trapper and sawmill operator. A complete record of his transactions at the Sale Shop gives an indication of the stock on hand at the time (Young 1920:270-276).

Textile articles sold included blankets (3 points/red bar, 3 points/BB, 3½ points/BB), blue flannel yardage, striped cotton shirts, blue list cloth, common cloth capots (4 Ells, 4½ Ells), Indigo blue Duffle yardage, red Baize, cold Thread, Cold Silk Thread, Olive cord trousers, common cotton handkerchiefs, fine printed cotton, second Blue cloth, Second blue cloth Vest, Pullecutt Cotton handkerchiefs, Long Worsted Hose, 9/8 Bleached Cotton, Black Silk Thread, no. 25 Black Silk Thread, purple Merino, cotton shawl, fine Cassimere Trousers, fine blue Cloth Jacket, Band Silk handkerchiefs, 2d Claret Brown cloth, blue common Strouds, Regatta Cotton yardage, Waterproof Hat, Cotton Wick, No. 26 Thread, Rowing Shirts, Long Men's Worsted hose, common cloth Trowsers, DK Valentia Vest, 38 inch Silk Handkerchief, Seamens drawers, 38 inch Black Silk Handkerchief (original spelling and capitalization retained) (Young 1920:270-276).

Metal articles sold included Ball, Stock Lock 12 inch, Flat bastard files 1¼ inch, 20d Sharp Nails, Tin Kettles (No. 1, No. 2, No. 6, No. 3), Tin Milk Tureens, Gilt Coat Buttons, Mill Saw 6 ft, Scalping Knives, Indian Awls, 5 feet Cross Cut Saw, Cross Cut Saw Files, Clasp Knife with Driver, Trace Chain, Small Tin Tureen, Tin funnel, and Bridle Bits (original spelling and capitalization retained) (Young 1920:270-276).

Articles of ceramic materials and glass include Earthenware Cups and Saucers with handles, Earthenware Deep Plates, Earthenware Washhand Basins, Earthenware jug 1 Qt Rand, Stand Lamp, fruit dish (original spelling and capitalization retained) (Young 1920:270-276).

Other durable goods included 6thd Ratline, Sea Boots, uncut pot paper,

bone jacket buttons, Lamp Oil, Womans Shoes, Dressing Combs, ruled foolscap paper, Gunpowder, Windsor Soap, Boys Shoes, Ivory Combs, Gunflints, pipes, Japd Tray (original spelling and capitalization retained) (Young 1920:270-276).

Provisions and consumable goods include Cocoa, Hyson Tea, Congo Tea, Twist Tobacco, Cavendish Tobacco, Loaf Sugar, Madeira Wine, Strychnine with Phial, Twankey Tea, Coffee, Port Wine, Muscatel Raisins, and Currants (original spelling and capitalization retained) (Young 1920:270-276).

Apparently the scarcity of textile goods mentioned by Mrs. Whitman was being remedied by 1839, for the significant fact about the Young list is the large number and variety of textile products. The large investment in textile stock is explained as a response to the demand created by the growing population of the Oregon Territory. McLoughlin's fateful decision to open the Sale Shop to settlers, discussed elsewhere (cf Steele 1975), required a major change in the type of stock imported. This mercantile orientation is similarly reflected in other retail stores in the United States at the time. For example, the Asa Knight store, in the upper Connecticut Valley (roughly 1830-1851), had a 45% capital investment in textiles and 25% in fancy goods (including sewing supplies, shawls, gloves, straw bonnets, shoes, and hosiery). "The availability of inexpensive cotton textiles had largely brought to an end hand spinning and weaving. In 1846 Asa Knight had on hand 1688 yards of calico, 694-3/4 yards of cotton shirting, 352-3/4 yards of gingham, and smaller amounts of silk, linen, fine cotton goods, and woolens...While the late eighteenth-century American trader supplied only imported British textiles and East and West India goods to communities in which textiles were spun and woven at home, his counterpart in the 1830's also offered quantities of imported and domestic machine-made textiles and the products of many American industries" (Nylander 1975:685). This is not to overemphasize the parallels between a New

England store and the frontier Sale Shop, but to point up the significance of an increase in textile products at the expense of other stock.

Evidently, the stock at the European Sale Shop was not enough to satisfy Isabella Ross, wife of an employee at Fort Nisqually. In 1839, she received an order of 54 different types of items totaling 68 pounds, 15 shillings, (\$332.75 at the prevailing exchange rate). In addition to the usual household items, thimbles, needles, buckles, hooks and eyes, curling irons, and side combs, a large number of textile items are included, including such exotic items as 2 Mauslin de Laine drapes, 1 Sfine Oxford mixed coat, 1 super olive riding coat, 2 pr doeskin trousers, 1 silk figured Swansdown waistcoat, 3 Chintz drepes, and 3 yards of Scotch Cambric (HPC 1839). The list, which is about 70% textile items (37 types of items), is cited to indicate another reason for the change in stock of the Sale Shop, the increasing number of women in the Oregon Territory after about 1839. The influx of women resulted in a greater demand for textile goods than was the case before 1839.

As was the case in other commodities, ready-made clothing came to the Oregon Territory about 20 years or more after/<sup>it</sup> was offered in the settled Atlantic seaboard cities. Clothing stores, selling ready-made clothing, first appeared in the United States between 1813 and 1819. By 1825, the Boston directory listed 35 clothing stores selling ready-made clothing (Cobrin 1970:20),

The population of the Oregon Territory increased significantly between 1840 and 1852 . Fort Vancouver officials became aware that consumer demand dictated a fresh stock of goods at the Sale Shop. A letter of 1843 from Dugald Mactavish at Fort Vancouver to William Tolmie at Fort Nisqually reflects the problems of stock:

...I felt somewhat embarrassed at your demand for green blankets seeing that the opportunity being present, there is little probability of your getting them this outfit. McLoughlin told me to send no more guns as he thought enough had enough had gone to Fort Nisqually for this year. Handbags, smoothing planes are not to be found at Vancouver and you must go without. The other articles you have ordered to be sent around the portage to Nisqually...(Fort Nisqually Record 1843:October 13)

By 1844, the Hudson's Bay Company was responding to the new demand for consumer goods. The inventory for the Sale Shop for that year, reproduced in Hussey (1972:217), shows a considerable increase in goods of a type calculated to appeal to Oregon settlers rather than fur traders. Table 4 summarizes these consumer-oriented goods, some of them completely new to the records of the time for the Oregon Territory.

In addition to the change in the character of the goods, from fur trade goods to consumer goods, the historical and archaeological record indicates cultural and technological changes during the 1840-1852 period. In the 1974 excavation of the Sale Shop, 7684 non-threaded fasteners were recovered, including 3973 wrought-rod nails and 1971 machine-cut sheet nails. Previous research by Charles H. Hibbs of the National Park Service (Hoffman and Ross 1973) has established the temporal priority of wrought-rod to machine-cut sheet nails. "Cut" nails (interpreted as machine-cut sheet nails) make their first appearance in the Oregon Territory on the inventories of Fort Vancouver for 1844, although not in terms of a specific designation until 1848, when a shipment from Fort Victoria to Fort Nisqually on the steamer Beaver brings in 18-1/2 M cut nails. Thereafter, the quantities of both wrought-rod (interpreted as including "clasp" nails, "fine drawn rose" nails, "shingling nails" and all others not specifically designated as "cut" nails) nails and machine-cut sheet nails increase significantly, although the former are imported in slightly larger quantities through 1860. Table 5 lists items which were replaced by products of a newer technology during the period. In some instances, it is to be noted that the new item does not entirely replace the older version, perhaps because patterns of acceptance required time for establishing the new product, which was usually cheaper and technically superior.

# TABLE 4

## CONSUMER-ORIENTED GOODS LISTED ON THE SALE SHOP INVENTORY FOR 1844 (Hussey 1972:217-230)

Belts, Scarlet Worsted  
Bombazette, black  
Boxes, Japand. tin Tobacco  
Boxes, Wood shaving large  
Snuff Boxes  
Braces, Gentlemen's leather  
Brushes (hand dusting, nail, and large paint)  
Buttons (jacket/bone mounted, mother pearl jacket, Maltese, 6 other types)  
Camlet, blue  
Cassimere (superfine blue and superfine mixed)  
Coating (white bath)  
Combs (large Cramber horn, horn dressing, small ivory dandruff, shell braid)  
Comforters (Worsted)  
Corduroy (dark olive)  
Cotton (10 types and sizes)  
Ferrets (silk Italian)  
Frocks (duck sheeting)  
Garters (highland worsted)  
Ginghams (Earlston fancy)  
Looking Glasses (three types)  
Gloves (Gentlemens dark Kid and Ladies short Kid)  
Handkerchiefs (5 types)  
Hats (6 types)  
Hatcovers (oiled silk and waxed)  
Hose (cotton colored half)  
Leather (English sole)  
Linen (Irish and bed ticking)  
Merino (common colored and superfine colored)  
Mittens (worsted)  
Pots (Japanned tin, 3 sizes)  
Razors, paper cased  
Ribbon (4dy, 6dy, 10dy, and 24dy)  
Rings (com. brass finger and stoned brass finger)  
Shirts (striped cotton and fine striped cotton)  
Shirts (flannel, rowing, and blue serge)  
Shoes (boys, girls, infants, and womens, and five sizes of mens)  
Soap (mottled, vegetable, and windsor)  
Spoons (table, Britannia Metal table, and Brittania Metal tea)  
Tobacco (Canada roll, Carrot, Irish, Leaf, and Cavindish plug)  
Trousers (9 types)  
Vests (common blue cloth, second blue cloth, Scarlet-with sleeves)

Stationery:black inkpowder, blotting paper, ruled foolscap paper, thick quarto post paper, plain yellow uncut pot paper, black lead pencils, slate pencils, slates, and narrow pink office tape



TABLE 5

PRODUCTS OF A NEWER TECHNOLOGY INTRODUCED AT FORT NISQUALLY. The date of introduction of the newer item, which replaced or supplemented the older version, is shown in parentheses (Source: Fort Nisqually Records 1833-1860).

<u>Old item</u>	<u>New item</u>
Wrought-rod nails (as defined in Hoffman and Ross 1973: )	Machine-cut sheet nails (English version: 1848; American version: 1854)
Fire steels	Matches (1854)
"Clasp" nails and staples	Woodscrews (1843)
Candlesticks	Stand lamps (1841)
pre-Welt sewn boots and shoes	Welt-sewn boots and shoes (1848())

1853-1860

In the early 1850's, a combination of economic factors, excessive U.S. tariff duties after 1849, the seizure of several vessels by aggressive U.S. Customs officials, and the competition of other merchants in the Oregon Territory, contributed to the decline of the Hudson's Bay Company mercantile business in the Oregon Territory. The factors contributing to this decline have been considered at length elsewhere (Steele 1975

The decline had a striking effect on the stock of the Sale Shop. Before 1853, the stock consisted almost entirely of goods obtained in England (or country-made goods) shipped annually directly to Fort Vancouver. After 1853, the Hudson's Bay Company no longer sent English goods directly to Oregon Territory posts, although annual ships continued to go to Fort Victoria, on Vancouver Island. After 1853, the records for Fort Nisqually demonstrate that Oregon Territory posts, including the Sale Shop at Fort Vancouver, were supplied either from Victoria or from the firm of Allan, Lowe and Company, 115 Clay Street, San Francisco (Careless 1969:4). Thereafter, American-made goods, such as the handled axes made by the Collins & Company (New York) firm appear on the inventories and are sold in the Sale Shop. Table shows the new American-made goods, obtained from Allan, Lowe and Company or, in at least one instance, directly from New York (Steele 1975 :100).

During this period, the stock of the store reflected social and cultural changes in the Oregon Territory. Before 1854, fire steels were frequently shown on the inventories. Used with a special "Strike-a-light" flint, a specially-prepared piece of charred linen, and whatever tinder supply the fire steels were indispensable fire-starting apparatus in the early period. After 1853, matches begin to show up on the inventories, the so-called "lucifer" matches, kept in well-corked bottles to prevent dampness (Fort Nisqually 1854). Fire steels no longer show up on the inventories after 1853, at least for the Sale Shops at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually. However, they are

# TABLE

## AMERICAN-MADE GOODS APPEARING ON THE INVENTORIES AT FORT NISQUALLY (Source: Fort Nisqually Records 1854, 1856, 1858)

### 1854

Medium Axes  
Ox Chains  
Blue drill  
Brown drill  
Red twilled flannel  
Blue twilled flannel  
Metal head gimlets  
Mincing knives  
Bar Lead  
Rubber (India) leggins  
Dead Locks (7 inch and 5 inch)  
Brass drawer locks (12")  
Iron till locks (5")  
Brass sloping desk  
Brass padlocks (2")  
Tufted mats  
Round wood matches  
Woodscrew nails  
Stove piping  
Folding boxwood rules  
Cooking stoves #5  
Mens overshoes  
Tacks  
Measuring taps  
Bed ticking  
Painted tubs  
Saleratus  
Ruled foolscap paper  
Straw wrapping paper  
Seamless cotton bags  
Brass curtains (bands)  
Canal barrows  
Carpernter's braces and bits  
Maple Chairs (4 dozen)  
Maple Arm Chairs (6 dozen)  
Maple rocking chairs (8 dozen)  
Socket chisels  
4/4/ Oil cloth  
Finger grain cradles  
Grindstones  
Narrow butt hinges (1-3/4" and 3")  
Brass kettles  
Dessert knives and forks  
Plaid Linseys  
Assorted cut nails (100 kegs)  
Brass bound pails  
Assorted cold pails  
Eagle ploughs  
steel ploughs  
Points for ploughs  
French window sashes 8x10

### 1854(contined)

Hand Saws (#23)  
Scythes and handles  
Shovels and tongs  
Shield back sofa  
Martingales (plated, various sizes)  
Whips (7 types)

### 1856

Red Twilled flannel  
Blue twilled flannel  
Firmers Gouges (1/8" to 2")  
Iron Butt Hinges (assorted)  
Black Jeans  
Mincing knives  
Plaid Linseys  
Boxwood Rules  
Folding handle measuring tapes

### 1858

Blue Mackinaw Blankets  
Luckie Ornooco Tobacco  
Mens Sea Boots

still shown on the invoices of goods for the outlying posts, Fort Colville and Fort Walla Walla, as late as 1855 (Fort Nisqually Records 1855).

For this item, Chance(1973:38) shows no requisition at Fort Colville after 1840, although the records he cites for the period are not continuous.

Although the diverse stock acquired during the early 1850's was still on hand, the records indicate that little change took place during the last years of the 1850's. In a letter from Fort Vancouver to Fort Nisqually in 1858, Sale Shop clerk John M. Work writes:

I have shipped on board the steamer Belle to your address a small bale containing all the articles you ask for with the exception of the Peregrine Lozenges, India Rubber Cape, and the Nive of Balsam. We have none of these articles on hand at present. I have also sent Ladies' White Woollen Hose having no colored. The Pilot Cloth Trowsers now forwarded are No. 6 is the smallest pair we have. Perhaps you can get them made to fit you. The Duffle we have at present is so badly moth eaten that it is not worth sending. Should you prefer Pilot Cloth in the piece instead of the Trowsers you had better return them and I will send you cloth to make a pair (Fort Nisqually Records 1858:October 25)

From the correspondence, the inventories, and from the archaeological record, it is evident that the Fort Vancouver Sale Shop had taken on the character of an English country store, at least in terms of stock. Table the stock of a "small general shop" in England (1853) the stock of a small store in the upper Connecticut Valley (roughly 1830-1851)

. From the 1840's to 1860, the Sale Shop stock is roughly similar in character. Before about 1840, however, the Sale Shop stock contrasts sharply, emphasizing fur trade goods.

If the anthropological significance of the foregoing is not apparent, it is partly because the records cited are incomplete. A more complete and systematic search of the Hudson's Bay Company archives in London and Ottawa is required, to delineate the precise details of the shifts in stock sold at the European Sale Shop. The justification of such a search is in the fact that the Sale Shop was the first true retail store in the Oregon

TABLE

STOCK OF ENGLAND IN 1853 (Davis 1966:267-268) AND A SMALL STORE IN THE UPPER CONNECTICUT VALLEY 1830-1851 (Nylander 1975).

English Store, 1853	Conn. Valley Store, 1830-1851
Grocery: Tea, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, chicory, spices, barley, patent flour, semolina, sauces, pepper, mustard, bird-seed, scent.	Reeds, buckram, ribwire flowers, and silk for millinery, spices, raisins, sugar, tea, coffee, rice, baking soda; carpenter's nails, screws, furniture hardware, paints, and oils; button, sewing threads and twist; dyes and mor-quills, penknives, ink powders, slates, pencils, sanders, blotting sand, wafers, blank books, spellers and dictionaries; combs, tooth-brushes, toilet soaps, and spectacles
Chandlery: Black-lead, paste-black, starch, grits (prepared), night-lights, German paste, twine, cord, rottenstone, emery, whitening, putty-powder, oxalic acid, seet sweet oil, soda, sand-paper, bath-brick, Fuller's earth, oongreve matches, soap, blue, gum, etc.	Local products: window glass, flour, live geese and turkeys, ax handles, feathers, button molds, butter and cheese, prunella shoes, felt hats, beans, corn, dried apples, honey, crackers, whip handles, stocks, brooms, butter tubs, and small wood articles
Hardware: Nails, tools, cutlery, tinware, toys, turnery (i.e. brushes, clothes pegs and other cheap wooden items), garden seeds, stationery	Calico, cottonshirting, gingham, silk, linen, fine cotton goods, and woollens, shawls, gloves, straw bonnets, shoes, and hosiery
Drapery: Cheap cotton and woollen piece-goods, needles, threads, wool, beads, etc.	
Drugs. (To be compounded by the shopkeeper) purgatives (black draughts from senna, ginger, etc.), siedlitz powders, adhesive plaster, ginger beer (stone bottles from the Potteries at 10s. a gross), soda-water powders, sherbert powders, ginger-beer powders, baldness powder pomades, tooth-powders, hair-dyes, phosphorus paste for rats, inks, bug-poison.	

from The Shopkeeper's Guide (Anon.), 1863

Territory, and indeed, from 1829 to about 1841, the only retail store in the area. Until about 1849, the vast majority of durable/<sup>and perishable</sup> goods used and consumed by anyone in the Oregon Territory came from the Sale Shop. A more complete specification of the stock of the Sale Shop, historically and archaeologically, will permit the conceptual reconstruction of the economic, social, and cultural life of the 1829-1860 period in the Oregon Territory.

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